

Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

§ 979.41

(c) To furnish to the Secretary such available information as he may request;

(d) To appoint such employees, agents, and representatives as it may deem necessary, to determine the compensation and define the duties of each such person, and to protect the handling of committee funds through fidelity bonds;

(e) To investigate from time to time and to assemble data on the growing, harvesting, shipping, and marketing conditions with respect to melons;

(f) To recommend research projects to the Secretary in accordance with this part;

(g) To notify handlers of each meeting of the committee to consider recommendations for regulations and of all regulatory actions taken which might affect growers or handlers and to provide such notification to producers through appropriate news releases or such other means as may be available to the committee;

(h) To give the Secretary the same notice of meetings of the committee and its subcommittee as is given to its members;

(i) To prepare a marketing policy;

(j) To recommend marketing regulations to the Secretary;

(k) To recommend rules and procedures for, and to make determination in connection with appropriate safeguards;

(l) To keep minutes, books, and records which clearly reflect all of the acts and transactions of the committee and such minutes, books, and records shall be subject to examination at any time by the Secretary or his authorized agent or representative. Minutes of each committee meeting shall be reported promptly to the Secretary;

(m) Prior to or at the beginning of each fiscal period, to prepare a budget of anticipated expenses for such fiscal period, together with a report thereon;

(n) To prepare periodic statements of the financial operations of the committee and to make copies of each such statement available to producers and handlers for examination at the office of the committee;

(o) To prepare and forward to the Secretary, prior to the last day of each fiscal period, an annual report, and

make a copy available to each handler and grower who requests it. This annual report shall contain at least:

(1) A complete review of the regulatory operations during the fiscal period;

(2) An appraisal of the effect of such regulatory operations upon the melon industry; and

(3) Any recommendations for changes in the program.

(p) To cause the books of the committee to be audited by a competent accountant at least once each fiscal period and at such other times as the committee may deem necessary or as the Secretary may request. The report of such audit shall show the receipt and expenditure of funds collected pursuant to this part. Two copies of such report shall be furnished to the Secretary and a copy of each such report shall be made available at the principal office of the committee for inspection by growers and handlers; and

(q) To consult, cooperate, and exchange information with other marketing order committees and other individuals or agencies in connection with all proper activities and objectives under this part.

EXPENSES AND ASSESSMENTS

§ 979.40 Expenses.

The committee is authorized to incur such expenses as the Secretary finds are reasonable and likely to be incurred during each fiscal period by the committee for its maintenance and functioning, and for such purposes as the Secretary, pursuant to this subpart, determines to be appropriate. Each first handler's pro rata share of such expenses shall be proportionate to the ratio between the total quantity of melons handled by him as the first handler thereof during a fiscal period and the total quantity of melons so handled by all handlers as first handlers thereof during such fiscal period.

§ 979.41 Budget.

Prior to or at the beginning of each fiscal period and as may be necessary thereafter, the committee shall prepare an estimated budget of income

and expenditures necessary for the administration of this part. The committee may recommend a rate of assessment calculated to provide adequate funds to defray its proposed expenditures. The committee shall present such budget to the Secretary with an accompanying report showing the basis for its calculations.

§ 979.42 Assessments.

(a) The funds to cover the committee's expenses shall be acquired by the levying of assessments upon handlers as provided for in this subpart. Each handler who first handles melons shall pay assessments to the committee upon demand, which assessments shall be in payment of such handler's pro rata share of the committee's expenses;

(b) Assessments shall be levied during each fiscal period upon handlers at a rate per unit established by the Secretary. Such rates may be established upon the basis of the committee's recommendations and other available information;

(c) At any time during or after a given fiscal period the committee may recommend the approval of an amended budget and an increase in the rate of assessment in conformance with § 979.41. Upon the basis of such recommendations, or other available information, the Secretary may approve an amended budget and increase the assessment rate. Such increase shall be applicable to all melons which were handled by each first handler thereof during such fiscal period;

(d) The payment of assessments for the maintenance and functioning of the committee may be required irrespective of whether particular provisions of this part are suspended or become inoperative;

(e) To provide funds for the administration of the provisions of this part the committee may accept the payment of assessments in advance;

(f) If a handler does not pay his assessment within the time prescribed by the committee, the assessment may be increased by a late payment charge or an interest charge at rates prescribed by the committee with the approval of the Secretary.

§ 979.43 Accounting.

(a) All funds received by the committee pursuant to the provisions of this part shall be used solely for the purposes specified in this part. At the end of the fiscal period an annual financial audit shall be conducted by a competent accountant and two copies sent to the Secretary;

(b) The Secretary may at any time require the committee, its members and alternates, employees, agents, and all other persons to account for all receipts and disbursements, funds, property, or records for which they are responsible. Whenever any person ceases to be a member of the committee or alternate, he shall account to his successor, the committee, or to the person designated by the Secretary, for all receipts, disbursements, funds and property (including but not limited to books and other records) pertaining to the committee's activities for which he is responsible, and shall execute such assignments and other instruments as may be necessary or appropriate to vest in the successor, the committee, or person designated by the Secretary, the right to all such property and funds and all claims vested in such person;

(c) The committee may make recommendations to the Secretary for one or more of the members thereof, or any other person to act as a trustee for holding records, funds, or any other committee property during periods of suspension of this part, or during any period or periods when regulations under this part are not in effect, and, if the Secretary determines such action appropriate, he may direct that such person or persons may act as such trustee or trustees.

§ 979.44 Excess funds.

(a) If, at the end of a fiscal period the assessments collected are in excess of expenses incurred, each handler entitled to a proportionate refund of any such assessments which represent payments by the handler in excess of his pro rata share, shall be credited with such refund against his operations of the following fiscal period or such excess shall be accounted for in accordance with one of the following: